



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
May 11, 2007

Contact: Kevin Cartwright, Chief PIO
Telephone: 410-396-5616
Fax: 410-625-2768

Fire Department Holds Graduation Ceremony for Fire Fighter/Paramedic Apprentices

Class 19 the First to Have Opportunity to Earn College Credits

Baltimore, MD – This evening, the Baltimore City Fire Department held graduation ceremonies for Fire Fighter/Paramedic Apprentice Class #19. The ceremony took place in front of friends and family at the Baltimore City Fire Academy, on Pulaski Highway.

Approximately 55 recruits are graduating after completing nearly six months of intense training in the areas of fire fighting, hazardous materials operations, aerial apparatus operations, pump operator, familiarization of personal protective equipment in addition to hose streams and appliances. The Firefighter/Paramedic Apprentices (FPA) were also instructed on how to operate self contained breathing apparatus, perform ventilation techniques as well as search and rescue and fire ground operations.

Today's graduates also received statewide certification as emergency medical technicians (EMT) which will enable them to care for the sick and injured citizens of Baltimore. Though EMT certified, more training is required. These FPAs will continue their education over the next 18-months through coursework that will enable them to gain Maryland State certification for being Advance Life Support (ALS) capable EMTs. Upon completion of all required training, members will be promoted to the rank of Fire Fighter/Paramedic.

But today, for members of the Fire Department continuing education no longer just means becoming an ALS provider or keeping up certification requirements. Today's fire department is dependent upon a workforce with a broad set of skills. Information technology, constantly updated systems of communications and cutting edge hazmat detection expertise are but a few examples of the skills needed by today's big city firefighters.

To help meet these new challenges the BCFD has partnered with Baltimore City Community College to develop the Fire Department Degree Program. Together, we have developed a college curriculum for an Associate's Degree in Fire Science Technology.

All coursework a recruit does while at the Academy, including FF1, FF2, EMTB and EMTI, is now transferable to BCCC as college credits. Now, upon graduation from the Academy, a firefighter apprentice will have about two semesters' worth of credits, or about one-third of what he or she needs to receive an associate's degree.

Attending today's ceremony were Baltimore City Mayor Sheila Dixon, Chief of Fire Department William J. Goodwin, Jr., members of the Baltimore City Council, President of the Fire Fighters Local 734 and The Board of Fire Commissioners along with family members, well wishers and friends.

###